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TO

PARSON MALTHUS.

On the Rights of the Poor; and on the cruelty recommended by him to be exercised towards the Poor.

North Hampstead, Long Island,
6th Feb. 1819.

PARSON,

I have, during my life, detested many men; but never any one so much as you. Your book on POPULATION contains matter more offensive to my feelings even than that of the Dungeon-Bill. It could have sprung from no mind not capable of dictating acts of greater cruelty than any recorded in the history of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Priests have, in all ages, been remarkable for cool and deliberate and unrelenting cruelty; but it seems to have been reserved for the Church of England to produce one who has a just claim to the atrocious

pre-eminence. No assemblage of words can give an appropriate designation of you; and, therefore, as being the single word which best suits the character of such a man, I call you *Parson*, which, amongst other meanings, includes that of Boroughmonger Tool.

It must be very clear to every attentive reader of your book on *Population*, that it was written for the sole purpose of preparing beforehand a justification for those deeds of injustice and cruelty, of which the *Parish Vestry Bill* appears to be a mere prelude. The project will fail: the tyrants will not have the power to commit the deeds, which you recommend, and which they intend to commit. But, that is no matter. It is right that the scheme should be exposed; in order that, as we ought to take the will for the deed, we may be prepared to do justice to the schemer and to the intended executors of the scheme.

In your book you shew, that, in certain cases, a *crowded* population has been attended with great evils, a great deal of unhappiness, misery and human degradation. You then, without any reason to bear you out, pre-

dict, or leave it to be clearly inferred, that the same is likely to take place in England. Your principles are almost all false; and your reasoning, in almost every instance, is the same. But, it is not my intention to waste my time on your abstract matter. I shall come, at once, to your practical result; to your recommendation to the Boroughmongers to pass laws to *punish the poor for marrying*.

I have in my possession a list of 743 parsons (of the Church of England I mean) who have taken an active part in the Dungeon and Oliver proceedings, either as justices of the peace, or as suppressors, unlawfully, of my publications. They have threatened hawkers; they have imprisoned many; they have starved the families of not a few; they have threatened booksellers; they have, in many instances (not less than twenty that have come to my knowledge) caused "*Paper against Gold*" to be excluded from *reading rooms*, though that is a work which ought to be read by every one, high as well as low, rich as well as poor. I must hate these execrable Parsons; but, the whole mass put together is not, to me, an object of such perfect execration as you are. You are, in my opinion, a man (if we give you the name) not to be expostulated with; but to be punished. And,

I beg the public to regard this paper of mine as intended merely to prove, that you deserve the severest punishment that outraged laws can inflict upon you.

The bare idea of a law to punish a labourer and artizan for *marrying*; the bare idea is enough to fill one with indignation and horror. But, when this is moulded into a distinct proposal and strong recommendation, we can hardly find patience sufficient to restrain us from breaking out into a volley of curses on the head of the proposer, be he who he may. What, then, can describe our feelings, when we find that this proposition does not come from an *Eunuch*; no, nor from a *Hermit*; no, nor from a man who has condemned himself to a life of *Celibacy*; but from a *Priest* of a church, the origin of which was the incontinence of its Clergy, who represented views of chastity as amongst the damnable errors of the Church of Rome, and have, accordingly, fully indulged themselves in carnal enjoyments: what can describe our feelings, when we find that the proposition comes from a *Priest* of this luxurious, this voluptuous, this sensual fraternity, who, with all their piety, were unable to devote their own vessels to the Lord!

But, before I proceed further, let us have your proposition be-

fore us in your own insolent words; first observing, that, at the time when you wrote your book, the Boroughmongers began to be alarmed at the increase of the *Poor rates*. They boasted of wonderful *national prosperity*; wonderful ease and happiness; wonderful improvements in agriculture; but, still the poor-rates *wonderfully increased*. Indeed, they seemed to increase with the *increase* of the Boroughmongers *national prosperity*; which might, I think, very fairly be called the eighth wonder of the world.

Being in this puzzle, the Boroughmongers found in a Priest the advocate of a method to rid them of their ground of alarm. You, overlooking all the *real causes* of the increase of the paupers, assumed, without any internal proof, and against all experience, that *the giving of relief* is the cause of the evil; and then you came to your proposition of a *remedy*. The words, the infamous words, are as follows:

"To this end I should propose
"a regulation to be made, declaring, that *no child* born from any marriage taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate *child* born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. After the public notice, which I have proposed, had been given,

"to the punishment of nature HE should be left; the punishment of severe want: all parish assistance should be rigidly denied him. HE should be taught that the laws of nature had doomed him and *his family* to starve; that HE had no claim on society for the smallest portion of food; that if HE and *his family* were saved from suffering the utmost extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of some kind benefactor, to whom HE ought to be bound by the strongest ties of gratitude."

I never yet knew a Parson that understood *grammar*, so that I am little surprized at this HE, which, according to the words, means *the child* (though it may be a *girl*); but which HE does, I suppose, mean the *man*, who shall dare to marry or to have a bastard by some unmarried woman; and yet, in this latter case, what mean you by talking of the man's *family*? Cruel, impudent, and muddle-headed: a Parson all through! I will, however, suppose you, by HE, to mean the *man*; and will, if I can, coolly remark upon this atrocious proposition.

You talk of the "*punishment of nature*"; you talk of "*the laws of nature* having doomed him and his family to *starve*." Now, in the first place, the laws of nature; the most imperative of all her laws, bid him *love* and seek the

gratification of that passion in a way that leads to the procreation of his species. The laws of nature bid man as well as woman desire to produce and preserve children. Your prohibition is in the face of these imperative laws; for you punish the illegitimate as well as the legitimate offspring. I shall not talk to you about *religion*, for I shall suppose you, being a Parson, care little about that. I will not remind you, that the articles of the Church, to which articles you have *sworn*, reprobates the doctrine of celibacy, as being hostile to the word of God; that the same article declares that it is lawful for all Christian men to marry; that one of the Church prayers beseeches God that the married pair may be fruitful in children; that another prayer calls little children as arrows in the hand of the giant, and says that the man is happy who has his quiver full of them; that the scriptures tell us that Lot's neighbours were consumed by fire and brimstone, and that ONAN was stricken dead; that adultery and fornication are held, in the New Testament, to be deadly sins: I will not dwell upon any thing in this way, because you, being a Parson, would laugh in my face. I will take you on your own ground: the *laws of nature*.

The laws of nature, written in our passions, desires and propen-

sities; written even in the organization of our bodies; these laws compel the two sexes to hold that sort of intercourse, which produces children. Yes, say you; but nature has *other laws*, and amongst those are, that man shall live by *food*, and that, if he cannot obtain food, he shall *starve*. Agreed, and, if there be a man in England who cannot find, *in the whole country*, food enough to keep him alive, I allow that *nature has doomed him to starve*. If, in no shop, house, mill, barn, or other place, he can find food sufficient to keep him alive; *then*, I allow, that the laws of nature condemn him to die.

"Oh!" you will, with Parson-like bawl, exclaim, "but he must not commit *robbery or larceny*!" Robbery or Larceny! what do you mean by that? Does the law of *nature* say any thing about robbery or larceny? Does the law of nature know any thing of these things? No: the law of nature bids man to take, whenever he can find it, whatever is necessary to his life, health, and ease. So, you will quit the law of nature *now*, will you? You will only take it as far as serves your purpose of cruelty. You will take it to sanction your barbarity; but will fling it away when it offers the man food.

Your muddled Parson's head has led you into confusion here. The *law of nature* bids a man not

starve in a land of plenty, and forbids his being punished for taking food wherever he can find it. Your law of nature is sitting at Westminster, to make the labourer pay taxes, to make him fight for the safety of the land, to bind him in allegiance, and when he is poor and hungry, to cast him off to starve, or, to hang him if he takes food to save his life! That is your law of nature; that is a Parson's law of nature. I am glad, however, that you blundered upon the law of nature; because that is the very ground, on which I mean to start in endeavouring clearly to establish the *Rights of the Poor*; on which subject I have, indeed, lately offered some observations to the public, but on which subject I have not dwelt so fully as its importance seemed to demand; especially at a time, when the Poor ought to understand clearly what their rights are.

When nature (for God and religion is out of the question with Parsons); when nature causes a country to exist and people to exist in it, she leaves the people, as she does other animals, to live as they can; to follow their own inclinations and propensities; to exert their skill and strength for their own advantage, or, rather, at their pleasure. She imposes no shackles other than those which the heart and mind themselves sug-

gest. She gives no man dominion over another man, except that dominion which grows out of superior cunning or bodily strength. She gives to no man any portion of the earth or of its fruits for his own exclusive enjoyment. And, if any man, in such a state of things, cannot get food sufficient to keep him alive, he must die; and, it may truly enough, then, be said, that "the laws of nature have *"doomed him to be starved."*

But, when this state of things is wholly changed; when the people come to an agreement to desist, *for their mutual benefit*, from using their cunning and strength at their sole will and pleasure. When the strong man agrees to give up the advantage which nature has given him, in order that he may enjoy the greater advantage of those regulations which give *protection to all*, he surely must be understood to suppose, as a condition, that no state of things is ever to arise, in which he, without having broken the compact on his part, is to be refused, not only protection from harm, but even the bare means of existence.

The land, the trees, the fruits, the herbage, the roots are, by the law of nature, the common possession of all the people. The social compact, entered into for their mutual *benefit and protection*; not Castlereagh's "*social system*,"

which means the employment of spies and blood-money men and the existence of mutual suspicion and constant danger to life and limb. The social compact gives rise, at once, to the words *mine* and *thine*. Men exert their skill and strength upon particular spots of land. These become *their own*. And, when laws come to be made, these spots are called the *property* of the owners. But still the property, in land, especially, can never be so *complete* and *absolute* as to give to the proprietors the right of withholding the means of existence, or of animal enjoyment, from any portion of the people; seeing that the very foundation of the compact was, the *protection* and *benefit* of the whole. Men, in agreeing to give up their rights to a common enjoyment of the land and its fruits, never could mean to give up, in any contingency, their right to *live* and to *love* and to seek the gratification of desires necessary to the perpetuating of their species. And, if a contingency arise, in which men, without the commission of any crime on their part, are unable, by moderate labour that they do perform, or are willing to perform, or by contributions from those who have food, to obtain food sufficient for themselves and their women and children, there is no longer *benefit* and *protection* to the whole; the social compact

is at an end; and men have a right, thenceforward, to act agreeably to the laws of nature. If, in process of time, the land get into the hands of a comparatively small part of the people, and if the proprietors were to prevent, by making parks, or in any other way, a great part of the land from being cultivated, would they have a right to say to the rest of the people, you shall *breed no more*, if you do, *nature* has doomed you to starvation? Would they have a right to say, "We leave you to the *punishment of nature*?" If they were fools enough to do this, the rest of the people would, doubtless, snap them at their word, and say, "Very well, then; *nature* bids us live and love and have children, and get food for them from the land: here is a pretty park, I'll have a bit here; you take a bit there, Jack;" and so on. What! say the proprietors, would you take our *property*? No: but, if you will neither give us some of the fruits without our labour, nor give us some of them for our labour, we will use some of the land, for starved we will not be. "Why do you *love* and *have children* then?" Because nature impels us to it, and because our right to gratify the passion of love was never given up either expressly or tacitly.

But there are the *helpless*; there

are those who are *infirm*; there are babies and aged and insane persons. Are the proprietors to support them? To be sure they are; else what *benefit*, what *protection*, do these receive from the Social Compact? If these are to be refused protection, why is the feeble and infirm rich man to be protected in his property, or in any other way? Before the Social Compact existed, there were no sufferers from *helplessness*. The possession of every thing being in common, every man was able, by extraordinary exertion, to provide for his helpless kindred and friends by the means of those exertions. He used more than ordinary industry; he dug and sowed more than ordinary; all the means which nature gave were at his command according to his skill and strength. And, when he agreed to allow of proprietorship, he understood, of course, that the helpless were, in case of need, to be protected and fed by the proprietors. Hence the *Poor*, by which we ought always to mean the *helpless* only, have a right founded in the law of nature, and necessarily recognized by the compact of every society of men. Take away this right; deny its existence; and then see to what a state you reduce the feeble, shadow of a man, who calls himself a land-owner. The constables and all the whole *posse* of the county

are to be called forth to protect *him*. The able and hearty labourer is to be *compelled* to fight for this frail creature; but if the father of this labourer become *helpless*, this father is to be handed over to the *punishment of nature*; though nature would enable the son to provide most amply for the father, if there were not laws to restrain the son from using for the supply of the father that same strength which he is compelled to use in the defence of the feeble proprietor! Oh, no! Mr. Parson! If we are to be left to the *punishment of nature*, leave us also to be *rewarded* by nature. Leave us to the honest dame all through the piece: she is very impartial in rewards as well as in her punishments: let us have the latter, and we will take the former with all our hearts. Their Boroughmongerships were extremely angry with the SPENCEANS for their talking about a common partnership in the land; but the Spenceans have as much right as you to propose to recur to a state of nature; yet *you* have not yet been *dungeoned*.

By this time the Hampshire Parsons, who are at the bottom of all projects brought forward by STURGES BOURNE, who is the Chairman of their Quarter Sessions, may, though they are as stupid as they are malignant, begin to perceive, that you might as

well have left the *law of nature* alone. Let us next see how the case stands according to the *law of the land*, which, I fancy, you and Sturges and his sable crew will find, awards some *rights to the Poor*.

To suppose such a thing possible as a Society, in which men, who are able and willing to work, cannot support their families, and ought, with a great part of the women, to be *compelled* to lead a life of celibacy, for fear of having children to be starved; to suppose such a thing possible is monstrous. But, if there should be such a Society, every one will say, that it ought instantly to be dissolved; because a state of nature would be far preferable to it. However, the *laws of England* say, that no person shall be without a sufficiency of food and raiment; and, as we shall see, this part of our laws is no more than a recognition of those principles of the social compact, of which I have just been speaking.

The lands of England, like those of any other country, were, at one time, and before society was formed, the common property of all the people in England. *Proprietorship* in individuals arose as I have above stated; 'till, at last, all the land was appropriated. But, so far (when society came to be

formed completely) was the proprietorship of individuals regarded as *absolute*, that it was made a thing wholly dependent on the sovereign power of the nation. The sovereign power (which with us, is in a king as chief of the nation) was regarded as *the proprietor of all the land*: as the lord of it all. And, at this very hour, there is not an inch of land in the kingdom, to which any man has any *title*, which title does not acknowledge that the land is *held under the king*. There are lands held under Lords of Manors; but, then these Lords of Manors hold their manors *under the king*. So that, as the king has no Divine Right to rule, but rules and holds his office for the good of the people, and as he may, in case of violation of the laws, be set aside, and see another put in his place, he, as Lord Paramount of the land, is only the Chief of the nation; and, of course, all the lands are *held under the nation*.

Agreeably to this notion we daily see the lands of men taken away for public uses sorely against their will. We know that armies may be encamped on them, without liability to actions of trespass. We know that men are *paid*, indeed, for their lands taken away; but, they are *compelled* to give up the lands. Nay, their lands may be *ceded to foreign nations*. All

which, and many other things that might be mentioned, prove, that the nation never gives up its paramount right to the lands.

Now, Parson Malthus, were there not some *conditions*, on which the lands of England were granted to, or made the property of, individual persons or families? Every one, who knows any thing at all of the laws of England, knows, that to every grant of land was attached the performance of some *service*, or *duty*, towards the *Sovereign*, or chief of the nation. Sometimes the service was of a military nature; sometimes of an agricultural nature; sometimes of a pecuniary nature. Nay, the hold which the Sovereign still kept of the lands was so strong, that he was regarded, and he acted too, as guardian of all heirs and heiresses; and, in default of regular heirs, took back the lands, no one being able to give his lands by *will*.

Thus the king, or sovereign, held an estate in the lands. From this estate the sovereign drew his means of carrying on the government, of making war, alliances, and so forth. These services have, for the greater part, been abolished by acts of Parliament; and taxes have been raised to supply their place.

As to the *poor*, when the lands were at first granted to individuals, those individuals were the heads of *bands* or little *knots* of men. The leader, in time, called himself the *Lord*, and those under him his *vassals*, or *villeins*, or, under tenants, and almost slaves. The lords had the services of the vassals and villeins, and the vassals and villeins were protected and taken care of by the lords. So that, in this, the worst state of things (always excepting the pre-

sent) the *poor* must, of course, have had a provision, they being in some sort the property of the lords.

When Christianity came to make considerable progress in England, and the lords of the lands became Christians, they caused churches and parsonage houses to be erected; they were allowed to give lands to, and to settle tithes on, the Priest. And now mark me, Parson, for we are now coming to the point at which you will be pinched. These priests, you will observe, were to have *no wives*, and, of course, *no children*, to keep. Therefore, it would have been preposterous to give them the tenth part of the produce of the lands, seeing that besides, they disclaimed all worldly possessions. *What should they do with this tenth part of the fruits of the earth?* The fact is, that the endowment was made upon the condition, that the priest should expend a fourth in his own way; a fourth was to go to the bishop of the diocese; a fourth was to maintain the edifice of the church; and a fourth was to *maintain the poor*. For a long while there was no *general law* for the yielding of tithes; but, when that charge was legally imposed on all the lands, the poor were, of course, every where entitled to this fourth part. *Villeinage* being at this time greatly diminished, it was proper to provide a resource for the helpless other than that of the tables of the lords, and, therefore, this species of hospitality was transferred to the church, from which the Poor had a *right* to demand a maintenance and from which they received it, too, until the *robbery of the poor* (which has been called a *robbery of the church*) took place in the reign of king Henry the Eighth.

Before that time, the poor were, according to the *common law*, that is, the settled law of the whole kingdom, to be *sustained by those who received the tithes*, in the several parishes, or districts, which, indeed, all became parishes, except some particular spots, now called extra-parochial. That this was the *law of the land*, at and before the grand robbery of the poor in the time of Henry the wife-killer, and defender of the faith, is certain, not only from the *law-books*, but from the *statute-book*.

This is so important a matter, that, though I have, on a very late occasion, gone pretty fully into it, I will not be deterred, by the fear of a charge of repetition, from doing the same again.

When the regular clergy, or monks, or, more properly speaking, the persons, of whatever order, who lived in religious houses, or monasteries, came to be in high repute for their piety and for the efficacy of their prayers, in behalf of the souls of rich persons, they very soon persuaded those persons to give them a part, at least, of their property; and, some of these rich persons gave *advowsons* to the monasteries.

When churches were founded and endowed, the founder and endower became the *patron*, or *protector*, of it; and he had the right to *present* to the bishop the *priest*, who was to officiate in the church and receive its revenues. This right of presenting is called an *advowson*, and we know that *advowsons* are now become objects of *traffic*, and have been frequently *gambled for*.

Rich persons frequently gave to the monasteries *advowsons* as well as other things; and then the monasteries sent a priest of their own to act as parish priest, who was

allowed a small part for himself; but who was obliged to send away the far greater part of his revenues to the monastery. So that, out of this arose great distress to the poor, who thus lost *their share* of the tithes. This gave rise to two acts of Parliament, one passed in the fifteenth year of the reign of Richard the Second, and one in the fourth year of Henry the Fourth, ordering, that, in all such cases, a sufficiency of the revenues of the church should be retained in the parish for the sustenance of the poor.

Thus, then, clear as day-light stood the *legal* rights of the poor, previous to the grand robbery of them, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when, and in a few years afterwards, they were despoiled of the whole of their reserved resources. The tithes were either *given to courtiers*, or to *priests with wives*, and thus they have continued to this day.

But, still, there would be poor and helpless persons; and as there was no such man as you at hand to recommend the "*punishment of nature*," provision was made for the poor in the way of *rate*, or *tax*. Hence arose the present system of poor-laws, which, for those unable to work, provide food and raiment, and, for those able to work, employment whereby they may obtain food and raiment. And BLACKSTONE, in his enumeration of the *Rights of Persons*, has this right to be sustained in case of need. "The *law*," says he, "not only regards *life* and *member*, and protects every man in the *enjoyment* of them, but also furnishes him with every thing *necessary for their support*. For there is no man so indigent, or wretched, but he may demand a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life from the more opulent part of the community, by means of the several statutes enacted for the relief of the

"poor; a humane provision, and *dictated by the principles of society.*" Surely it was dictated by those principles; but the necessity of making it arose out of the *robbery of the poor* by Henry the Eighth's courtiers and by Priests of the succeeding reigns, which Priests have, from that day to this, chosen to have wives and families. According to the Law of the Land it is not *Larceny* nor *Robbery* where a person (not owing to his own fault) is *reduced to extreme necessity, and steals victuals merely to satisfy present hunger, and to prevent starving*; and, I have no hesitation in saying, that a Jury, who convicts a person, under such circumstances, are guilty of *perjury*. The law is just here; for, if there be a state of society, which exposes persons to starvation, without any fault on their own part, such society is a monster in legislation; it is worse than a state of nature, and ought to be dissolved. What! A social compact, formed for the purpose of punishing persons (who have been guilty of no fault) for using the only means left within their power to preserve their lives! A social compact, which does not recognize the right to live! Oh, no! you do not deny any body a right to live: you only wish for a law to make them *live on grass or dirt*, if they marry after a certain day, or are the fruit of any marriage or of any cohabiting or carnal communication after that certain day! That is *all* you want. *Only* that! Those, who are alive now, whether married or single, may have a right to *live*; but all that marry, or that shall proceed from any marriage or any unlawful commerce, *after this time*, are to feed with the crows or the rabbits! So that, at the end of about forty or fifty, or, at most, eighty years, there shall be no person entitled to *relief*; and, that, in a few years, the number of persons so entitled shall be very small.

Callous Parson, hardened Parson, I have proved, that the relief now given, and that ought to be more

largely given, by the statute law, to the Poor, is their *right*; that it came to supply the place of that relief which the law of the land gave them before the thing called the Reformation; and that the law of the land only supplied, in this respect, the place of the law of nature. I have traced the Rights of the Poor; meaning the *helpless*, either from inability to labour or from inability to find labour; I have traced their Rights down from the origin of the Social Compact to the present day, and have shown, that men, when they originally gave up their right of possessing the land in common, now gave up, either for themselves, or for future generations, the right of living, loving, and perpetuating their like.

But, muddy-headed parson, while you deny the labouring classes these rights; while you choose to consider them as having no claim *on society* for "*the smallest portion of food.*" Oh! impudent Parson! *Your* wife and children have, I suppose! But, to be cool, if possible. While you consider the labouring classes as having no claim *upon society* even for the smallest portion of food; you do not say a word about the claims, the *many* and *great claims*, which society *has upon them*! If a young man, a labourer, just one and twenty, were to hear your proposition; if he were to hear you say, that, if he married, he should be left to the laws of nature, and should have no claim on society, even for the smallest portion of food, one may suppose that the *answer*, which he would give you, would be in somewhat the following words:

"Mr. Parson Malthus,

"I have no objection to your proposition; for, though I and my brother and our two sisters have a father and mother, who, owing to the taxes, have never been able to save any thing for old age, and though we may have large families of children, yet I am not at all afraid, that in consequence of this new regulation, we shall be able to do very well for the future. As we have

“not any claim upon society, when
 “we are infirm or helpless, for even
 “the smallest portion of food, it will
 “certainly not be pretended, even by
 “the Hampshire Parsons, with he of
 “Botley at their head, that society
 “has any claim upon us. We have
 “been *born* here in England, to be
 “sure; but, as society was not to
 “blame for our not remaining in our
 “progenitors loins, so we are not to
 “blame for coming into the world.
 “Here we are, however; and, as we
 “now find, that we have no right to
 “protection from society, we will set
 “to work, and do the best we can
 “for ourselves. The society has
 “shaken us off; and we will shake it
 “off. You send us to the law of na-
 “ture for food in our distress; and
 “we will avail ourselves of that law
 “for our benefit. As to any other
 “laws we know nothing of them.

“We love good beer very much.
 “And we will work for barley and
 “make malt; and we will grow hops;
 “and we will make our beer for three
 “half-pence a pot. We will go to the
 “sea side and rake up our salt, which
 “will not cost us more than six-pence
 “a bushel. We will get our tea,
 “sugar, coffee and tobacco from Ame-
 “rican ships, for a tenth part of
 “what they cost us now. We will
 “get some wine and brandy from
 “men, whom the society-people call
 “smugglers. We will get some rushes
 “and dip them into our fat, and make
 “us candles. We will boil up our
 “grease and steep our ashes, and
 “make us soap. All these things,
 “and many more that I can name,
 “are perfectly agreeable to the law of
 “nature, and are only forbidden by
 “the laws of society, with which, in
 “future, thank God, we are to have
 “nothing to do; and our savings,
 “which will arise from this change,
 “will be so great as to put us out of
 “all danger of future want.

“We shall soon have a little farm
 “in the family; and, though we may
 “owe something for a while to the
 “man who may sell us the farm, it

“will soon be our *own*. No contri-
 “butions from us. You, who will,
 “perhaps be the parson of the parish,
 “shall never put your head over our
 “gate, nor poke your nose into our
 “pig-stye. You may be useful to the
 “*Society*, perhaps; it may think it
 “wise to keep you and your wife and
 “children in idleness; but, we want
 “nothing of you, and, therefore, we
 “shall keep the tenth part of the
 “crop to ourselves. If we should
 “want a Priest, we will engage him
 “and pay him for his work.

“As to personal service, as soldiers
 “or sailors, we shall not need to
 “waste our time and strength and to
 “hazard our lives in that way. We
 “shall be always able to defend our-
 “selves against any body that can be
 “supposed likely to attack us. The
 “safety of the society is nothing to
 “us. There may be riots or rebe-
 “lions or treasons or invasions by
 “dozens for any thing that we need
 “care. Your proposition frees us
 “from all *duties* towards the society,
 “since it frees the society from the
 “*only duty* that it had to perform to-
 “wards us. It is impossible for you
 “to point out one single advantage
 “that society ever offered us, save
 “and except that of giving us food,
 “in case we were wholly unable to
 “earn it for ourselves. And the so-
 “ciety having freed itself from that
 “duty, we owe it no duty at all; and
 “no duty shall it have from us.”

Reply to him, Parson! Reply to
 John Chopstick! And yet John
 might have gone much further; for, it
 will be denied by no man living ex-
 cept a parson, that if such an act of
outrage were passed against the la-
 bouring classes, the bonds of society
 would, as to them, be wholly broken.
 They would have a right to recur to
 the laws of nature, and to take every
 man of them, whatever lands and
 houses and goods he was able to take.
 The doctrine of *natural allegiance* is,
 that every man is bound to be faithful
 to the sovereign, to aid, assist, and
 obey him; and for what? Because

every man receives *protection* from the sovereign; and, that he contracts the obligation of allegiance *before he is born*; because, he is *protected before he is born*. But, you, hardened and impudent Parson, are for passing a law to *cast him off before he is born*, and for leaving him "to the *punishment of nature*."

You see the labouring classes heavily *taxed*; you see part of the money raised from them given to swarms of lord and lady pensioners; you see the children and other relations of the Boroughmongers supported in idleness out of the taxes; you see whole families of women and children upon the list of Splendid Paupers; you see every parish with its priest's wife and her litter of children, living on the tithes; you see millions of the people's money given away to French Emigrants, some laymen, and some Popish Clergy; you see hundreds of millions of taxes squandered on war for the restoration of the Bourbons, and a debt, which never can be paid, contracted for the same purpose, and that of restoring the Pope and the Inquisition; and seeing all this, you who are a protestant priest, have the infamy to affect to believe, that the miseries of the nation are occasioned by the *labouring classes*, and, accordingly, you propose to *punish them*!

If you had not been a shallow and muddle-headed man, you never could have supposed, that the increase of the paupers in England had been caused by the practice of affording parish relief, seeing that, at the end of *two hundred years* of that practice the poor-rates amounted to less than *three hundred thousand pounds a year*; that, at the end of another *eighty years*, they amounted to *two millions and a quarter*; and that, at the end of the last twenty years before you wrote, they amounted to about *five and a half millions* a year. Seeing that such were the facts communicated to you by authentic records, any one but a mud-headed parson, or a perverse knave, would have looked about him

for causes of the increase other than the practice of giving parish relief. When any rational and sincere man had seen, that this practice of giving relief had, in the first two hundred years, not debased the people and made them improvident; when he had seen, that, during the last hundred, while the increase of taxes had been gradual, the increase of paupers had been gradual, till the enormous taxes began to be raised; and when he had seen, that the last twenty years had been so very fruitful in producing paupers; he would soon have looked out for the real causes in operation during those several intervals. But, to have stated these causes would not have pleased the Boroughmongers, who had imposed the taxes, and who had livings to give to prostituted priests; and, therefore, you pitched upon the *labouring classes*. They were to be *punished* for the rapacity and waste of those who had tyrannized over them, and brought them to misery. The cause of the increase of paupers has been *taxation, co-operation with a false money*. But, as this has been proved so many times, I will not now prove it again. Amongst the labouring classes there wants no more proofs of this kind. *They* now know the real causes of their misery and slavery.

As to your notion of *danger* from an increase of the population of the kingdom, it is too absurd to merit serious remark; seeing that, at the end of a thousand years of the kingly government, there remain *six or seven acres of land* to every man, every woman, and every child! However, in order to expose the follies and falsehoods of the Boroughmongers as to this matter, I will here make a remark or two on it. These tyrants, caused what they called an *enumeration* to be taken in 1801, and another in 1811. The tyrants wanted to cause it to be believed, that the people had *increased in number under their sway*. This would have been no *proof* of an absence of tyranny to be sure; but, at

any rate, it would have been a proof that the number of their slaves had augmented. They were extremely eager to establish this proof; and to work they went, and, at last, put forth the population return of 1801, which made the total population of *England alone* amount to 8,331,434. Now, mind, Parson. In 1811, they caused another enumeration to be taken, when they made the population of *England alone* amount to 9,538,827. Bravo? Impudent mountebanks! Here is *more* than a *seventh* of increase in ten years! So that, at this rate of going on, the population of *England alone* will, in 1851 (only 32 years from this time) amount to 16,292,527; and, at the close of this present century, if their *paternal* sway should continue to that time, the population of *England alone* will amount to 27,891,009. Oh! monstrous liars! And, this is not all; the increase must be much greater than this: for, from 1801 to 1811, were ten years of most bloody war, when not only many men were killed, but when *two hundred thousand* of the men, and those of the most efficient of papas, were always *out of the country*, either on ship board or in foreign lands! Impudent liars! The Boroughmonger sway began in 1688; and, if the population have gone on increasing only since that time, the population at that time could not have exceeded 2,000,000.! Talk of "our Creator," indeed! The Boroughmongers are the most active creators that this world ever heard of.

The second return is made very nicely to keep pace, in most of its parts with the first. The *houses, families*; all increase in very *exact* proportion. But, there is one difference in the mode of making up the *lie*, which is worthy of attention, and which blows up the whole mass of cheatery. In the first return the persons were divided into three classes as to *occupations*, as follows:

1. Persons employed in Agriculture 1,524,227.
2. Persons employed in trade, handicraft, and manufacture 1,789,531.
- 3,313,758.
3. All other persons . . 5,017,431.

This was a damning fact for the Boroughmonger system! Here were almost *two idlers* for every *one working man*! No wonder that the *labouring classes* were *oppressed*! No wonder that they were *starving*! I, in my Register, very often observed upon *this fact*. Therefore, when the *second* return came to be made out, care was taken to *suppress this fact*, and yet to preserve an appearance of fairness. The classes, as to *occupation*, were now stated in *families*, and not in *persons* as before.

1. Families employed in Agriculture 697,353.
2. Families employed in trade, handicraft, and manufacture 923,588.
- 1,620,941.
3. All other families . . 391,450.

This is a pretty change in the space of ten years! To be sure the families of idlers are the *most numerous*; but what a monstrous difference is here! They must amount upon an *average* to nearly 20 persons in a family, while the labourers, journeymen, farmers and tradespeople, amount to little more than *two* in a family, including *lodgers*; so that there could have been no children at all amongst these labouring classes! Take heart, Parson! There can be no fear, then, of *their overstocking the land*! Oh, foolish Parson! Oh, lying Boroughmongers!

The returns were ordered by *Boroughmongers* and executed by *Parsons*; and, of course, no truth could be expected to be found in them; but

the falsehood might have been *better disguised*. This band, or, rather, two bands, of liars, should have remembered the old rule: "when you have told a lie upon any subject, *never speak on the same subject again*."—In 1801, there were 3,313,758 persons of the labouring classes; and, as the increase upon the whole population was, in 1811, a *seventh*, these labouring classes would, in 1811, contain 3,787,029 persons. But, this last return states them in *families*, of which the return says, that there were (in 1811) 1,620,941. So that, in 1811, there were, amongst the Labouring and Trading Classes, only *two* and a *third part of another*, to each family, including lodgers; or, only *seven persons to three families*!

Now, Boroughmongers and Parsons, take your choice: was the first return a lie; or was the second a lie? Both. It has all been a lie from the beginning to the end. It is a mere fabrication to delude, deceive, cajole and cheat the nation and the world; and the money expended to propagate the cheat ought to be, every farthing of it, refunded by the cheaters, and given back to those Labouring Classes, from whence the greatest part of it was taken, and to whose detestation I now leave you, Parson Malthus, and your foolish and insolent performance.

WM. COBBETT.

* NOTE TO MR. HUNT.

We have had a little sport *here* about the Borough-Bank Notes. They were frequently passed from hand to hand at New York. Many came from Canada and many from England, by emigrants especially. By first explaining the state of the base thing; by only a couple of paragraphs in the news-papers, I have given the base thing its death blow *here*. From ten per cent. discount I have brought the base thing down to fifty per cent. discount; and such measures are *in train*

* This is the note alluded to in the Letter to the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

as will make a pound Borough-note not worth a *copper*.—Emigrants should take care *not to bring out any Borough Notes*. Many have, of late, done this to their sorrow. I saw several notes sold last week for 2 dollars a pound, and *well sold too*! I would not have given a copper for the whole parcel, except to sell again *here*.—However the price will soon come down. It is no trifle to have given even *this blow* to the base thing; but, this is a trifle indeed to what you will, I imagine, hear of and see. It is not a parcel of poor ignorant potatoe-eaters that the Borough-tyrants have driven across the Atlantic *this time*!—We are anxious for *news*. The *Old Bailey Juries* acted bravely. They have, indeed, *settled the question*. However, other Juries may *hang again*; so that, I put not *my trust* in juries as to this *great matter*.—The "*Collective Wisdom* of the nation," as fool-knave Chronicle calls them, have begun their tricks by this time. Pretty tricks they will be! Now would be the time to pour on upon them; and pretty *pourers-on* we have in such men as Burdett and Waithman and the like!—However, *something* the "*Collective Wisdom*" must and will do; and, mind, *nothing* can they do, with a view of saving themselves, without doing just so much *in fulfilment of my predictions*. To *my shop* they must come at last. My drugs are bitter; but, though they will make ugly faces, they must swallow them. In short, they must *destroy the system themselves* this very year; or, *it will be destroyed for them*. A friend has written to me in great trepidation, lest I should expose *my assistants* to the fangs of Oliver, Sidmouth and Castlereagh! Lord love his heart! Does he imagine it to be necessary for *me* to meddle in such a thing? Let all our friends be perfectly tranquil on this account. I will never do any thing but what I *avow in print*. That has always been my way.—PERRY, I see, talks of Lord Picknose retiring from "the STERN

path of duty." I do think a change of ministry probable, and then we shall see BROUGHAM *Attorney General*; or something in that way. The two factions of Boroughmongers will, very likely, unite, like *Peachum* and *Lockit*. They must see the danger of the "*Puff-out*." They may, therefore, come to a compromise. While they are cutting and contriving; while they are endeavouring to secure themselves by reducing the interest of the Debt and by other tricks; while they are discovering signs of fear and weakness and exciting alarm amongst the fundholders, the *People* ought to be *uncommonly active*: they ought to meet oftener than ever; not to petition the Boroughmongers, but to *petition the Regent* to step forth and *recommend a Reform*. Good, large meetings; good speeches; good petitions; all these would do infinite service. As the Boroughmongers become more and more embarrassed and bewildered, the Reformers ought to press harder and harder upon them. Let the Reformers be assured, that our enemies can *never retrieve their affairs*; that the thing is wholly *impossible*. Let the Reformers despise the *comforting talk* of the fellows. Unless they pay in *specie*, they never can be *safe for a day*; and they cannot pay in *specie* without *blowing up the system*. These impudent liars will put forth *resolu-*

tions, returns, accounts; all sorts of things to deceive the nation and the world; and these will go forth uncontradicted and unexamined by Burdett and the rest of that tribe. These will assist the cheat by their silence at least. But, all will not do. The thing must and will go to pieces.— You know, that my assertion always was, *that the Bank of the Boroughmongers would never again pay in specie, unless the interest of the Debt were reduced*. If it did, I pledged myself to be ready to let Castlereagh broil me alive; but, then, whenever the interest of the Debt should be reduced (no matter how) I stipulated that I would get up on the horse on the Charing-Cross pedestal, and that a crown of Laurels should be placed on my head. Faith! I must make haste home; for they will soon be at the interest of the Debt. They will try to *disguise* the thing; but the attempt will not succeed. The moment they begin to *meddle*, they will find their weakness come on them.— However, speculations are useless, when the events themselves are at hand.—Let the Reformers be *ready* to take advantage of every circumstance that is calculated to assist them in recovering their "*birth-right*;" that is, the benefit of the Laws of the Land.

Adieu,

WM. COBBETT.

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